(b) whether Government also propose to bring in some kind of legislation to legalize "live-in-arrangement" practice, which is gaining ground?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) Government introduced on 9th May, 2003 'The Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2003' in Rajya Sabha in order to identify the areas of harassment, etc. to women. The Bill proposes to amend the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, so that a wife can also file petition in the district court within whose local limits of jurisdiction she may be residing. The Bill also proposes to amend provisions of the said Acts to provide that the parties to a matrimonial suit may prefer an appeal within a period of 90 days instead of 30 days.

(b) No such proposal is under consideration of the Government. However, Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System has recommended that section 494 of Indian Penal Code may be amended to the effect that if a man and woman were living together as husband and wife for a reasonably long period, the man shall be deemed to have married the woman according to the customary rites of either party.

Authorisation of negotiation with insurgent outfits of NE region

2447. SHRI RISHANG KEISHING: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government have authorised any Chief Minister, Minister or person to negotiate with insurgent outfits operating in the N.E Region;

(b) if answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) whether Government have since received any report in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SWAMI CHINMAYANAND): (a) to (c) Central Government has not authorized anyone to negotiate with the militants operating in the North Eastern Region except Shri K. Padmanabhaiah, Government

of India's Representative for Naga Peace Talks. However, any efforts on the part of Chief Minister, Members of Parliament and leading citizens to bring the militant outfits to the negotiating table, are welcome.

Clashes between two communities at Talhan, Punjab

2448. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Centre has asked for a report from the State Government over the recent clashes between two communities at Talhan (Punjab);

(b) whether the National Commission for SC/ST has blamed the district administration for lapses leading to clashes at Talhan;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Central Intelligence Agency of the US has also submitted a situation report on Talhan clashes to Government of India; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction on this report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The National Commission for SC/ST have reported that their team of officers headed by DIG (P) made an on the spot enquiry and the Commission made recommendation to the Government of Punjab. The findings of the Commission are that the police including the SHO appeared to have played a partisan role by not providing the protection, which was sought by the Scheduled Caste community of Talhan and have instead indulged in an uncalled for lathi-charge. The Administration instead of shifting the SHO, shielded him and could not take into account the serious implication and left it to junior functionaries to sort out the issue.

(c) No Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Economic Union of Southern States

2449. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Standing Committee of the Southern Zonal Council under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Government